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Viewing cable 07MANAGUA875, EU ELECTIONS REPORT MIXED BAG OF VALID

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Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#07MANAGUA875**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
07MANAGUA875	2007-04-03 23:08	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Managua

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-30/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2758456.aspx>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-30/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2758467.aspx>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-30/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2758468.aspx>
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<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/3966/la-ldquo-injerencia-rdquo-de-ee-uu-en-el-2006>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-23/Mundo/Relacionados/Mundo2758764.aspx>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-23/Mundo/NotaPrincipal/Mundo2758753.aspx>
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<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/4040/la-ldquo-injerencia-rdquo-de-venezuela-en-2006>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/4047/rodrigo-barreto-enviado-de-ldquo-vacaciones-rdquo>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-16/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2757239.aspx>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-16/Mundo/NotaPrincipal/Mundo2746658.aspx>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-16/Mundo/Relacionados/Mundo2757244.aspx>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-16/Mundo/Relacionados/Mundo2746673.aspx>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/3991/dra-yadira-centeno-desmiente-cable-diplomatico-eeuu>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/3968/pellas-pronostico-a-eeuu-victoria-de-ortega-en-2006>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/3967/barreto-era-ldquo-fuente-confiable-rdquo-para-eeuu>

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RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS

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DEPT FOR WHA/CEN AND EUR/ERA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/03/2017
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [NU](#) [XG](#)
SUBJECT: EU ELECTIONS REPORT MIXED BAG OF VALID
RECOMMENDATIONS, SKEWED CRITICISM

REF: MANAGUA 0627

Classified By: Ambassador Paul Trivelli for reason 1.4 (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: The European Union's final report on Nicaragua's national elections -- belatedly released on March 30 -- contains several useful recommendations, but soft-pedaled direct criticism of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) while unjustifiably bashing the USG and Nicaraguan Liberal Alliance (ALN). The reports key conclusions, which are in line with our post-electoral assessment and dovetail with CEPPS extension activities, focus on de-politization of the Supreme Electoral Council (CSE) and reform of the civil registry and citizen/voter ID application process. With the likely intent of making the report more palatable to the current administration, the EU chose to highlight USG "interference" in the electoral process over the much more direct subsidies and endorsements offered by Venezuela. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) European parliamentarian Claudio Fava, head of the EU's Electoral Observation Mission (EOM) in Nicaragua, released the EU's final election report to the public on March 30. Only about a dozen individuals from the diplomatic corps various civil society groups attended the 30-minute briefing, which seemed to have been deliberately down played and indeed was rescheduled at the last minute. No one in the U.S. mission received an invitation to the briefing (USAID Democracy Officer attended anyway), which had been originally set for February, but shifted because of Fava's alleged ill health.

EU Recommendations Track With Others

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¶3. (SBU) The EU EOM's recommendations focus largely on de-politization of the CSE, controlled at every level by the two majority parties, and reformation of the citizen/voter ID (cedula) and civil registry process. The report also criticized the CSE for the extremely slow release of voting results after the election and its failure to publish a full, final vote count. The report implies, however, that the secrecy surrounding the final vote tally by voting station did not substantially impact the final results because of the relatively low number of challenges registered by the political parties. (Comment: The Europeans failed to make the connection between the challenges and the reality of incomplete information from the CSE, which likely affected the outcome of several deputy races. Moreover, the challenges were difficult to file without full input from the CSE. End Comment.) The summary notes CSE efforts to hinder cedula issuance/distribution to Nicaraguan's not affiliated

with the ruling parties, but does not correctly identify the significant magnitude of the problem.

¶4. (U) The following is a summary of key recommendations in the EU report:

¶A. ELECTORAL ADMINISTRATION:

- Reform electoral law to guarantee selection of professional, qualified, apolitical CSE magistrates.
- Apply Civil Service and Administrative Career Laws to the selection of CSE officials at all levels.
- Reform process of selecting voting station officials to ensure equitable representation from all political parties.
- Ensure detailed regulations are in place to compensate for ambiguities in electoral law.
- Encourage greater transparency of electoral administration.

¶B. CIVIL REGISTRY:

- Update, simplify, and standardize civil registry procedures for all municipalities, including computerizing entire registry process.
- Highlight importance of cedula as a general identification document rather than simply a voter ID card.
- Enhance CSE supervision of municipal level registration process.
- Develop safeguards to prevent double inscription and ensure deaths and other status changes are registered.
- Implement campaign to educate rural population on importance of registering.

¶C. VOTERS REGISTRY (PADRON ELECTORAL):

- Simplify process to request, produce and distribute cedulas.
- Remove political party control over CSE municipal offices.
- Open permanent municipal cedula offices.

¶D. PUBLICATION OF RESULTS:

- Identify clear rules for publishing preliminary results to ensure transparency of process, including detailed breakdown of voting station results.
- Final results, including detailed voting station results, should be published on the CSE web site.

¶E. ADJUDICATION OF ELECTORAL CHALLENGES/APPEALS:

- Establish independent mechanism to resolve electoral challenges and appeals.

¶4. (SBU) Note: On March 12, the U.S., German, and Japanese Ambassadors met with CSE president Roberto Rivas to discuss the CSE's planned cedula reforms. Rivas claimed that the CSE is open to many of the suggested reforms regarding the civil registry and cedula process, but lacks the funds to fully implement them (reftel). End Note.

Report Equates U.S. with Venezuela and ALN with PLC

¶5. (SBU) The EU report highlights alleged U.S. "external interference" as a negative factor affecting the electoral campaign. According to the EOM, this interference came "mainly from U.S. Government officials and U.S. deputies (sic) against the FSLN presidential candidate and, to a lesser extent, against the PLC candidate and in favour of the ALN candidate." The Venezuelans also interfered, the report admits, but "on a lower level... by providing some fertilizer and petrol to FSLN-run municipalities and institutions on preferential terms, and by expressions of its support for Ortega and the FSLN." Interestingly, while minimizing the actions of the Venezuelan government, the report is able to detail specific examples of Venezuelan meddling while only making vague statements about USG interference.

¶6. (SBU) The summary points out that "the PLC and ALN presidential candidates used inflammatory language against each other and against the FSLN presidential candidate, who focused his campaign on reconciliation and avoided confrontation." However, it does not clarify that the PLC's attacks on the ALN were much more frequent and vicious, or that the CSE specifically sanctioned the PLC for releasing a fake announcement that the ALN candidate had withdrawn just days before the election. Nor did the report mention that Ortega's campaign was also directed at buying off and/or extorting candidates from rival parties.

Comment: Too Soft on Chavez

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¶7. (C) While the EU report certainly includes some valuable recommendations, it downplays or omits some notable transgressions and unjustifiably criticizes the USG. The summary only alludes to Chavez' direct endorsement of Ortega and misrepresents/distorts our role, which never included an endorsement of a specific candidate and conveniently omits mention of our support for all reformist parties, including the left-leaning MRS. Unfortunately, the orientation of the report and its (deliberately?) underwhelming release may well foreshadow the Europeans' continued reluctance to call the FSLN to account on upholding democratic ideals.

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